

From the Upper Chamber



Senate Information Office ♦ 201 Legislative Office Building ♦ Atlanta, Georgia ♦ 404.656.0028

Report for Tuesday, February 12, 2008

The sixteenth day of the 2008 legislative session was called to order by Lieutenant Governor **Casey Cagle**.

Senator **Don Balfour** of the 9th stated that the journal had been read and was found to be correct.

Senate Bills 444-448, Senate Resolutions 862 and 863, and House Bills 158, 209, 297, 1027 and 1248 were read for the first time and assigned to committees. The clerk of the Secretary of Senate then read the reports of standing committees and second readers.

After the morning roll call, Sen. **Ed Tarver** of the 22nd led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced the *Chaplain of the Day*, Reverend **Jerry Poole** of Miles Memorial CME Church in Martinez, who led the Senate in the daily devotional.

Sen. **George Hooks** of the 14th took the rostrum to ask the Senate to greet members of Leadership Sumter, who were seated in the Senate gallery.

SR 894 and House Resolution 1248 were read and adopted.

The Senate Consent Calendar for Privileged Resolutions, consisting of SR 855-858, 860, 861, 865-892 and 893, was unanimously adopted.

The clerk read SR 790, which commends the Georgia Rural Health Association (GRHA) and recognizes today as Rural Health Day at the Capitol. Sen. **Lee Hawkins** of the 49th took the well to introduce several representatives of the GRHA.

Sen. **Judson Hill** of the 32nd took the rostrum to welcome students from Brookwood High School, who were seated in the Senate gallery.

SR 892 was read and adopted. Sen. **Greg Goggans** of the 7th took the rostrum to introduce the inaugural class members of the Georgia Physicians Leadership Academy to the Senate.

Lt. Gov. **Cagle** recognized former Sen. **Ed Zipperer**, who was visiting the Senate today.

The clerk read SR 818, which recognizes and commends the Georgia Farmer Bureau Confederation. Sen. **John Bulloch** of the 11th took the rostrum to recognize a group of Farm Bureau members who were visiting the Senate.

The clerk read SR 724, which recognizes Ms. **Charlene Sizemore** for her work in promoting workforce training in Georgia. Sen. **Tarver** took the rostrum to honor Ms. **Sizemore**.

HB 387 was read. The legislation provides for the annual observance of Georgia Day on February 12. Sen. **Hooks** took the well to explain the legislation, stating that the measure reinstates a formerly recognized observance of Georgia Day.

HB 387 passed by a vote of 50 to 0.

Sen. **Hooks** asked for unanimous consent to immediately transmit HB 387 to the House. There was no objection.

The clerk read SR 826, which commends the Northside High School Eagles Football Team for winning the 2007 Class AAAA State Football Championship. Sen. **Cecil Staton** of the 18th took the well to introduce the team.

The clerk read SB 344, which will eliminate eleven obsolete state boards, commissions, authorities and/or councils in an effort to spend tax dollars more responsibly and efficiently. Sen. **Dan Moody** of the 56th took the well to explain the Committee Substitute.

The Committee Substitute to SB 344 was adopted unanimously.

SB 344 passed by substitute by a vote of 55 to 0.

SB 351 was read. The legislation provides for the creation of a Joint Statewide Water Planning Oversight Committee. Sen. **Bill Cowsert** of the 46th took the well to outline the make up, powers and duties assigned to this Oversight Committee.

Sen. **Ross Tolleson** of the 20th took the well to speak in favor of SB 351, and yielded to questions from Sen. **Steve Thompson** of the 33rd.

The Committee Substitute to SB 351 was adopted unanimously.

SB 351 passed by substitute by a vote of 53 to 1.

The clerk read SB 367, which changes provisions of the Georgia Coastal Management Act by eliminating the sunset date. President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1st took the well to explain the bill. He yielded to questions from Senators **Preston Smith** of the 52nd and **Steve Henson** of the 41st.

SB 367 passed by a vote 53 to 0.

The clerk read SR 850, which proclaims February 12 as African-American Business Enterprise Day. Sen. **Gail Davenport** of the 44th took the rostrum to introduce a group of African-American business leaders to the Senate.

SB 388 was read. The bill will establish an identity theft task force within the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, with eight GBI agents dedicated to fighting ID theft in Georgia. Sen. **Joseph Carter** of the 13th took the well to explain the bill.

SB 388 passed by a vote of 55 to 0.

The clerk read SR 686, which would create a Constitutional Amendment to freeze the amount of property tax a homeowner pays at the time of purchase. Any increase thereafter would be subject to limitations, and an increase in the amount of the homestead exemption would accompany the tax increase in most cases. The freeze would only apply to residential property.

Sen. **Johnson** took the well to explain the resolution and discuss the various tax reform measures that are currently before the General Assembly. He also mentioned his support for Amendment 1 by Sen. **Michael Meyer von Bremen** of the 12th.

Amendment 1, which would exempt property assessment decreases from the freeze, was unanimously adopted.

SR 686 was adopted as amended by a vote of 53 to 3.

SR 796 was read. Sen. **Chip Rogers** of the 21st took the well to explain the legislation, which creates a Constitutional Amendment to freeze property assessment values at the current, 2007 assessed value. Residential property values could not increase anymore than two percent a year and non-residential property values could not increase anymore than three percent a year. He also spoke in support of his Amendment 1, which makes a minor language change.

Sen. **Rogers** yielded to questions from Sens. **Vincent Fort** of the 39th, **Hooks** and **Nan Orrock** of the 36th.

Sen. **Thompson** of the 33rd took the well to stress that approving tax measures of this sort could place a financial burden on county governments.

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

The Committee Substitute to SR 796 was adopted as amended by a unanimous vote.

SR 796 was adopted by substitute by a vote of 48 to 7.

Following further announcements, Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19th moved the Senate stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 13.

#